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ABSTRACT

Organizations, with the help of human resource development (HRD) staff, must reexamine their objectives for future operations and the work force. Organizations with a focus on organizational development (OD) can provide meaningful work to employees and the organization itself. The OD framework consists of three units that must coexist as the major tenets of HRD: OD, career development, and individual development. The focus of OD is on improving the organization's performance through changes in quality, health, and economics. Within OD, more attention is paid to the wellness of employees. Career development is one type of wellness intervention. Individual development concentrates on the individual employee's growth and progress with the benefit of programs and activities that facilitate learning. Defined as the seeking of routine actions that enhance life and broaden human progression, aesthetics is applicable to the work force because going to work is a routine and those activities at work should be to advance the individual in a career and strengthen his or her quality of life. The kind of work to be performed in the future will depend on the advancements made in technology, society, and the environment. Such progress will result in further regulations for employee accountability. OD objectives must change in several areas to meet future needs. Organizations must steer toward proactive planning and provide complete and accurate policies, standards, and regulations. (Contains 16 references.) (YLB)

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Organizational Development and its Role in Providing Aesthetically Pleasing Work for the Future

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Organizational Development and its Role in Providing Aesthetically Pleasing Work for the Future

A spirit of discontent runs rampant among today's workforce. Impatience and dissatisfaction are rising in blue, gray, and most recently white collar workers. Employees are suffering from the effects of downsizing, limited promotional opportunities, and traditional autocratic demands from employers and, consequently, organizations. Moreover, organizations are failing to realize their own purposes despite measures taken toward their employees. Organizations, with the help of human resource development (HRD), must re-examine their objectives for future operations and the workforce. This paper explains how organizations with a focus on organizational development (OD) can provide meaningful work to employees and the organization itself.

Organizational Development Framework

The organizational development framework consists of three units; career development, individual development, and organizational development, itself. These three units must co-exist for organizational development and as the major tenants of HRD. Each component is addressed.

Organizational Development

Traditionally, organizations have considered the development of their organization to be achievement of financial objectives, namely, market share, return on investment, and profit. However, in today's workplace organizational development has given way to a new meaning. Organizational development

can become the means by which individuals and organizations can improve their stamina, respect, and financial accountability. Organizational development focus is upon improving the organization's performance through changes in quality, health, and economics (Gilley & Eggland, 1989, p. 78). In the truest sense, organizational development is a benefit to the employee and the organization. Organizations see the investment in employees as the key to a healthy organization and needed financial returns, while employees see self actualization through a more autonomous work environment. A congruency is established among the structure of the organization, its processes and strategies, its people, and the internal and external cultures (Gilley & Eggland, 1989, p. 75).

Organizational development is a systematic and planned process. An initiator or monitor must be in place in order to set the wheels of such a paradigm shift in motion. This initiator is a change agent. A change agent is vital to the process of OD in that the process is one that must evolve over the long term. French and Bell (1984) noted that organization development is a supported long-range stride to improving problem solving, renewal, and collaboration with an emphasis on teaming, and with the aid of a change agent facilitator. A change agent must be knowledgeable about the organization, optimum work methods, have an understanding of the organization at a macro level, and have research capabilities. In addition to the above, a change agent normally possesses a strong sense for the human being. The belief that

people are the purpose and reason for life's work and processes. A change agent believes that humans initiate the change process through their more allowable, and effective work (Gilley & Eggland, 1989, p. 85).

Another facet to organizational development is its system orientation. One break in the process and the whole organization is affected. Any performance in the organization reflects on the entire system. Individual competencies result in organizational competencies. In other words, all learning takes place together. Individual learning becomes the system learner through all of its component actions (French & Bell, 1984, p.21).

The question remains, "How is organizational development implemented?" The answer is action research. Action research is the first step in handing decision making to the employees and maintaining baseline information for prompt evaluation of processes. It also reinforces its title through explicit action taking. Action research follows the system approach by collecting research data about the relationship of the system to established goals and objectives. This information, in turn, is fed back into the system along with research experimentation. Ultimately, a second look is taken at the effects of the experimentation on the system as a whole (French & Bell, 1984, p. 108).

Career Development

Within organizational development, more attention is paid to the wellness of employees. Career development is one of those wellness interventions. A plethora of definitions exist for career development. Gutteridge

(1983) describes career development as a result of career planning activities which are ultimately seen through the eyes of individuals and organizations. The contention is that career development along with human resource planning are components of a larger human resource management system. Career development consists of two subsets, namely, career planning and career management which are the responsibilities of the individual and the organization respectively. Mattox (1986) defined career development as "the ingredient of HRD which accentuates matching individuals with jobs while considering the employee's desires and needs" (p. 2). Smith (1988) interpreted career development to involve assessments of employee skills, interests, attitudes, work environments, and decision making abilities. It is believed that only through such an intervention can efficient determination of employee career plans and programs be made since effective career development is composed of the organizations, managers, and employee members.

The common thread found in these definition alternatives is that career development is a process that includes organizational personnel, and individuals in assessing competencies needed by the organization and the employee. It is the equal responsibility of the organization and the individual to produce and provide competencies and opportunities for both to grow in their present status or to utilize the human resources elsewhere. For example, an employee within a company should provide the initiative to apply himself/herself in the organization for the benefit of the organization and succinctly fulfill an

internal or external career ambition. Simultaneously, the organization should provide those opportunities to satisfy the employee's initiatives and the organization's needs for growth. Gilley and Eggland (1989) emphasized this connection between individual and organizations regarding career development as an area of congruence.

The author maintains that the establishment of a congruence area is evidence of career development in process. This congruence area consists of an organizational marriage of ideas, techniques, and searches for obtaining skilled workers among all people. Career development displays success and establishes partnerships with managers and employees (Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993, p. 25).

Problems in implementing career development. There is no question that career development is an essential process for today's workforce. However, there are deeper problems requiring analysis before an organization can address the implementation of career development. Thus, a needs assessment at this level is imperative to sufficient planning. One such problem is the shortage of loyal employees (Hunter, 1985, p. 4). Employees who have the internal drive to excel, broaden horizons, and to increase their knowledge quickly look outside the organization when confronted with limited opportunities. In conjunction, organizations change rapidly through takeovers, new management, and conglomeration which often results in abandoned career development initiatives. With the program becoming abolished, the program

leader is often reassigned or negated due to the overall organizational change (Hunter, 1985, p. 4).

A domino effect would theoretically and eventually yield organizations without responsible people to address career development issues. The destruction that such a path creates is only disrupts organization and individual growth. When an organization begins to reassign career development personnel to other less enthusiastic tasks, they, too, may look for opportunities outside the organization. Thus, the amount of disloyalty is increased. Further, a processual organizational decline begins to take place from the effects of less quality employees and the inefficient use of human resources.

A problem that has become more crucial recently, is cultural diversity. With a wide span of races, genders, and ethnic backgrounds becoming the norm of the workforce, career development is necessary. Generally, genders do not have the same perspectives nor do different ethnic backgrounds. Career development in this kind of arena will have the additional responsibility of becoming a more culturally diverse activity when implemented.

Those responsible for career development must become more knowledgeable of other cultures and the significance of those cultures of one's career views. Issues concerning gender differences may require a revisit to traditional life stages. For example, individuals of today's generation may not fit traditional life cycles. An expert in career development should perhaps redesign programs to encompass gender equity participation (Jaffe, 1985, p. 83). Those

in career development may also have to address career discrepancies with other majority employees within the organization. Some majority Caucasian employees may place concerns regarding the fairness of promotions and job placements of those having a diverse background. Albert (1985) suggested the need for group discussions in order to break down some of the barriers created by cultural diversity.

Career development interventions. As stated earlier, the congruence of career development is a merging of activities on the part of individuals, and the organization. Essentially, the individuals' activities include actively using the opportunities provided by the organization. The individual must take the initiative to search out opportunities provided by the employer. For example, if an organization provides individual counseling of career competencies, then the individual should participate in such an analysis.

With the responsibility lying with the organization to provide opportunities, the organization must provide a sufficient number of interventions for the employee. Gilley & Eggland (1989) noted some possible interventions as (a) job postings, (b) mentoring, (c) career resource centers, (d) management career counselors, (e) workshops, (f) human resource planning, (g) performance appraisals, and (h) career pathing.

Individual Development

Individual development concentrates on the individual employee's growth and progress with the benefit of programs and activities that facilitate learning

(Gilley & Eggland, 1989, p. 26). Individuals have an inherent desire to learn and gain new knowledge. Often this desire is encouraged by their surrounding environment.

Career development provides individual development. This can best be illustrated through an example. Consider a plateaued employee in an organization who must be individually developed. Leibowitz, Kaye, and Farren (1990) described this type of employee as one who sees no future opportunities of promotion in the organization. In the initial planning of this employee's development, information was gathered on his/her goals and objectives. Career development can take these goals and objectives and provide the programs and activities to reach them. Additionally, career development can match interests, attitudes, and personalities with jobs or occupations that meet the employee's growth expectations.

The activities used by career development to foster learning could be non-job related but may still provide the employee's development (Nadler, 1983, p. 5). It could be that this employee would be satisfied with mentoring responsibilities. This would provide the challenge needed by the employee, as well as an opportunity to cultivate his personal and learning needs. Thomas and Kram (1988) say that mentor relationships provide support, and development is fostered for the mentor and the learner. Mentor relationships provide the facilitation of learning for individuals. In the end, the individual grows, through programs that increase learning.

Aesthetics of Work

Can the organizational development framework provide aesthetics to work? Can work be pleasing? Can employees look at work as being good? Historically, aesthetics has been associated with art, architecture, and landscaping fields. Aesthetics is thought of only as the beauty that can be provided from these works. However, today, aesthetics has become a term associated with pleasing facets of all of society. The definition of aesthetics can be compared to the positive results from organizational development to derive an answer to the above questions.

Aesthetics is defined as the seeking of routine actions which enhance life and broaden human progression (McWhinnie, 1991, p. 10). Aesthetics can be applied to the workforce in that going to work is a routine and those activities at work should be to advance the individual in a career and strengthen their quality of life. The encounters in the daily life of work are the means to broadening one's own horizons. Kaelin (1989) defined aesthetics as one's experiences. As an individual continually builds upon their knowledge base through experience, their lives can become more enhanced. For example, if an organization invests in an employee, that individual will meet with those experiences that improve hands on skills and cognitive capabilities. As a result, this employee is more knowledgeable and capable of bettering their personal and professional situations. Kaelin (1989) said better citizens are the result of aesthetic education.

From these definitions, one can see a relationship to work. Yet, what are the aesthetics of work? The aesthetics of work, with a proper organizational development framework, in place can be sorted by individual and organization. For the individual, work can provide the financial capability to purchase those material possessions that make one feel good about themselves. Furthermore, individuals are provided with career potential that will continue to broaden their financial base and improve their overall quality of life. Along with more skill, an individual can transfer those skills to various areas or prompted situations in life. A more expanded skill base also provides self-actualization. The individual is comfortable with his/her achievements in life. Work, also, provides the means for simple existence in life. Skills are provided so that one can perform the necessary actions in order to defend, serve, and survive independently. Additionally, skills furnish health needs twofold. First, skills can be developed so that one can care for himself/herself. Secondly, skills prepare individuals with the financial resources to purchase escalating health care services.

For the organization, aesthetics will remain focused on financial gains, but those financial gains become more consistent rather than stagnant. Profits will continue to rise, due to increased quality, throughput, efficiency, and productivity. All three of these results, stem from increased employee job satisfaction. An employee who is personally and professionally satisfied will take care to produce products with low return percentages, low costs, and high salability. If employees see a commitment to them on the part of the

organization, they in turn are more committed to their work for the organization. The organization is more effective when its employees have effective careers (Blimline, 1983, p. 571). Employees have ultimate responsibility for the major functions of the organization such as production, marketing, finance, and human resources. The products made by employees determine how many future products will be made and sold by the organization. The number of products to be made and sold and the quality of production decides the financial fate of the organization. Moreover, the organization reaps a return from the initial investment in the employee. The human resources of the organization are more cost effective because the organization is more productive, through efficient training, learner development, and the utilization of incumbent skills and knowledge. Otherwise, the employees might leave the organization to use skills never allowed to flourish. In turn, this would have created a continued turnover buildup resulting in periods of decline in quality. Retraining of new employees would surface. Furthermore, happy employees do not seek to form an alliance against the company, thus, preventing the "bad apple syndrome" from occurring.

The Future of Work

The kind of work to be performed in the future will depend on the advancements made in technology, society, and the environment. Such progress will result in further regulations for employee accountability. Future changes to be expected in these areas are described below.

Technology

Computers are and will continue to be the life's blood of technology. Once discrete information is now becoming on-line and retrieved world-wide. Computers are speculated to become thinking machines that function much like the human brain. Expert systems will have the answers for all people for all situations. Expert systems will know whether or not a person likes a heated or cold sandwich and perform the action. Software for computers will become more flexible in order for the user to choose their needs more freely. Investment decisions will be made via strategic simulation in which several hypothetical plans can be chosen. Technology will offer laptop computers that will be able to serve as an office. Laptops will become a mailbox, communication fax, and note recorder. CD-ROM technology will continue to rise. The CD-ROMs will be the great storage device much more so that today's floppy disk. Reams of historical and precious documentation will be scanned onto CD-ROMs. Moreover, the integration of computers will create computer kingdoms or corporations. Integration will give new meaning to monopoly, buyouts, and mergers (World Future Society, 1994).

Physical work such as agriculture and manufacturing will be a facelift from present activities. Farmers will operate theirs farms from information fed into computer systems. A computer operator can analyze soil, plants, crops, fertilizer, and the degree of moisture in the land. Also, with the use of computers, farmers can operate robotic labor for sowing and harvesting. On the

manufacturing side, employees will suffer from downsizing, due to, again, robotic labor. However, more knowledgeable human workers will be needed and required to maintain this type of equipment (World Future Society, 1994).

Society

The world is expected to become more fast paced with the emergence of the information age and the increased demands of time on individuals. Individuals will require flexibility in work environments. Employees will be in temporary positions and work as consultants for other organizations. Employees will move from job to job more frequently and market their skills differently. As a result, workers will have their own agents who will find buyers for their talents. Also, computerized portfolios that include an individual's life skills and relevant job skills will be required (World Future Society, 1994, p. 7).

Crime will become a huge factor for the society of the future. As the population increases and ages. There will be more opportunity for crime against the elderly and multicultures. Computer extortion by organized crime will pose threats to governments and organizations. Valuable information will be lost. Defects in materials and machinery could be the results of viruses introduced into the computer system (World Future Society, 1994, p. 2).

In the future, individuals will have a multitude of choices with regard to their own well-being. Humans will most likely be able to choose among gene manufactured bodies and body parts. People will become part biological, mechanical, and electronic. With these attributes, they will be able to change,

at will, what and whom they want to be. Human bodies will reach the diversity seen in clothing, cars, and other material possessions of today. They will be able to stimulate their own brains. On another note, people will be able to try out family life and parenting by renting the necessary individuals (World Future Society, 1994).

Environment

As noted previously, as populations continue to grow, the demand for natural resources will be a concern. As a result of acid rain, acid contaminated water supply will become a threat. Moreover, concentrations of pollutants from automobile exhausts, plants, and other man-made objects are infecting the water supply. Fresh water will become scarce. Therefore, new water-saving devices for irrigation and recycling will be required. Electricity will dominate hydrogen, and natural gas as the resource of the 21st century. Also, the earth will become a building resource. Bridges, highways, railroads, parking lots, and airports will be constructed underground (World Future Society, 1994, p. 3).

As society grasps for every inch of natural flavor, individuals will become more health conscience than ever. Organizations must focus on who their stakeholders are. It will no longer be themselves and employees with whom they must contend. Customers will be sensitive to the special interests and causes that organizations support, communities in plant vicinities, and environmental resources (World Future Society, 1994, p. 2).

Accountability

The freedom to perform and be productive opens many doors in which employees will become more accountable for their actions. The information explosion will result in a loss of privacy. Employees will be responsible for ethics in computing. There is great potential for white collar crime to increase with the reliance on computers. Electronic funds are capable of being easily interrupted or re-routed in transfer. Other crimes such as drug trafficking, and gambling will, now, be and opportunity for the white collar worker. An individual's personal information must be protected from misuse. As operations become more high-tech, sophisticated, and expensive, organizations will require sufficient financial justification for their actions. Departments, divisions, and individuals, must be able to provide cost-benefit comparisons of alternative actions. Organizations and individuals will be more readily accountable for taxes. The IRS will be able to audit from a computer site, thus, electronically. Unfortunately, financial ignorance is a fear of individuals. This reluctance to perform financially, increases the illiteracy of America (World Future Society, 1994).

Findings for Organizational Development

This paper has examined present day organizational development, what is pleasing about work, and the future needs of work. With these descriptions in mind, there is work required by HRD professionals in orchestrating organizational development. There are some facets that must remain constant

in this time of change. There must continue to be career development and individual development because they are the link to organizational development and aesthetics in work for all. Organizational development cannot happen without a concern for the employees. As noted above, employees will not perform for the organization unless they become a part of the goals and objectives of the company. Also, a change agent must be an active and regularly employable person of organizations. Additionally, organizations must continue to look at long-term processes for the accomplishment of their objectives.

However, there are several areas in which organizational development objectives must change in order to meet future needs. The expected future changes mentioned above most probably catches each of us by surprise and bewilderment. Therefore, organizations must steer toward proactive planning. They must be willing to take the risk of trying the untried. Technology will be available to make quick decisions, thus, it will be unnecessary to spend endless hours in the planning process. Secondly, hands-on employees will have the capability and the resources to perform these tasks. However, a change agent must be there to coordinate the effects and to provide results from the actions taken. Employees cannot be expected to change and blend to future technology overnight. It is essential that all employees become computer and financially literate. Employees must be able to build and maintain the robotics system for sustaining continual operations. Highly relevant and precise timing

of training should be a commitment and a component of organizational development. All employees must be able to participate in experimentation and research if new technology is needed. Again, employees will be more accepting and the organization will be highly regarded innovators. Wellness programs should also be a responsibility of the organization, as all personnel will be affected by stress, crime, and human engineering. These same programs must be a benefit to the part-time, temporary, and flexible workers. The organization must, too, gain the support of flexible workers in order to receive a return on their employee investment.

In regard to accountability, organizations must provide complete and accurate policies, standards, and regulations in order to make provisions against employee crime and to promote ethics. However, the organization must be careful not to over-regulate. Too many rules, will continue to stifle, individual abilities. The organizations must continue to relinquish holds and responsibilities by allowing employees control. Individual freedom in work can bring organizational learning. Organizations can only be learners through the experiences of employees. Experience provides the learning. Moreover, as individualism becomes important in organizations, the notion of systems thinking must accomodate individual roles within the system. If imposed, the above organizational development processes will automatically result in total commitment to the organization, employees, and the community.

The "goodness of work" can remain even though the world seems impersonal and high-tech. It is the untested and innovative knowledge of everyone within the organization that will bring satisfaction in the personal and professional lives of workers. This knowledge should entail future trends and issues and the input of those effected. Organizations and employees are the only players in deciding whether or not each achieves successful aesthetics on the cutting edge.

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